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Third  
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OCTOBER,  
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VOL.  
10

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR."

# All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 58.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 249.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1893. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### THROUGH THE RANKS.

By MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.)

Author of "Aunt Hepsy's Foundling," "My Land of Beulah,"  
"Bonnie Kate," "The Peyton Romance," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER VI. THE WISHING WELL.

YOU turned down a slippery little path-way, turned round a sharp corner, and there stood the little house facing you. No; not exactly facing you, for, as though seized with a fit of shyness, Norah O'Connor's humble home had turned its head aside, gazing with its two small window-eyes right into the woods, where the cushat sang overhead, and the tiny vole burrowed under the velvet-green moss. Here, in springtime, on the soft, billowy under-grass, primroses uprose like foam on the ripples of the sea. In a soft, open Christmas, snowdrops nodded their white heads among the brown bracken and shrivelled leaves, and were gathered by Norah, and taken to the little church about half a mile away nearer the city. The good old priest would smile as he saw the girl coming with the bunched-up white beauties—for flowers were scarce at Christmastide—and the altar must be dressed somehow. His old heart—compressed, but not withered by the life of isolation incident to his position—had a soft spot for Norah O'Connor.

There was a sad look in the girl's great grey eyes, that his experience as a student of humanity told him is often to be seen—even in early childhood—in those destined to much sorrow. Maybe it is the shadow of the long, dark days that are coming; the mark of a destiny that approaches with sure though stealthy steps. The good father knew that the traditional

purity and uprightness of the peasant woman of Ireland were not lacking in this fair flower of his flock; and the sad look in her eyes puzzled him.

"Shure, yer riverence, an' she's bin after havin' a look in her eyes same as if she were prayin' iver since she were a wee girl-baby lookin' up at me from the bress', an' spakin' as plain as plain, an' all the while she as dumb as dumb, as was only natural—praise be! I've a mind to think it's a spell as was cast on her by ould Divil Maloney as they called her—a rale witch—savin' yer riverence's presence—an' one as took a spiritooal hold on Danny Murphy's blue pig, an' the cratur destroyed himself by houlding his blessed ould head in a pail o' water, nose downmost, an' Mrs. Murphy took a fit, seein' the baste so contrairy, and lost her senses entoirely, in place o' ketching hould o' the curly tail of him an' pullin' like mad. An' that same Divil Maloney was caught out speerin' into the cot where the blessed child Norah lay slapin' the slape o' the righteous—praise be to all the saints this day!—an' the child set off sobbin' an' catchin' of her blessed breath same as if some one was batin' her—and ever after, if her purty mouth smiled ever so, her eyes never caught the glint; and bad cess to Divil Maloney, says I, for she cast a spell on the darlint, same as she did on Danny Murphy's blue pig—savin' your riverence's presence in the namin' of such a low-born cratur this day."

But we are wandering from the little cottage on the skirts of the wood. A pretty sight showed itself to the eyes of Alison and her cousin as the two reached the end of the narrow and crooked path leading from the road. Between the cottage and the edge of the wood were

several high, slender poles, and on the head of each a cunning square dovecote, with little arched doorways for the pigeons to go in and out of, and below these stood Norah, her cotton apron held in one hand to keep the grain in, and her lips crooning a low, soft cry, that sounded like "Ah-roo! Ah-roo!" Familiar enough it seemed to the inhabitants of the cotes, for, as the girls watched, the air pulsed with wings, and clouds of pigeons came fluttering to the ground. The little squeakers, only 'prentice hands at flying yet, made haste to climb, with rose-pink feet, all along Norah's linsey gown, thrusting their soft beaks into her closed hand, climbing even to her shoulders, boldly ruffling the ripples of her hair, hustling and bustling each other, and all the time keeping up the low, plaintive cry that was their way of pleading for notice. The conduct of their elders was more circumspect and becoming, though they gobbled eagerly enough, and crowded one on another as she slowly opened her apron, and let them get at the grain. One grand old blue-rock, with the hint of a fan, kept aloof from all the rest, bowing and curvetting near her feet, and coo-rooing in courtier-like fashion, as who should say: "Do not mind that vulgar crowd, but turn your attention to my superior manners and refined personality. I am really a very fine pigeon, and worthy of your notice." He had his way, as the persistently assertive generally have, and a special handful of grain was thrown to him, which he defended by standing right in the middle of it, and turning round and round, sweeping his tail against the ground, and pecking for dear life.

The girl, her lissom figure thrown back, her head raised and turned coaxingly to the little eager squeakers on her shoulders—she herself the centre of the many fluttering, outstretched wings, made a fair picture, and one that for some inscrutable reason became fixed with strange persistency in Alison's memory; but she caught sight of her two visitors—there was a little cry, she lost her hold upon the apron, down fell the grain, and a new fluttering and shoving took place as the pigeons threw themselves upon it—all but two loving little squeakers, who still nestled on Norah's shoulder.

"You're welcome, ladies," said Norah, making a pretty reverence, and coming forward with glad yet quiet self-possession. "Phelim, ye ill-mannered cratur, get up on your legs, and bid the ladies welcome."

And now Phelim must be introduced to the reader; a dog of marvellous gifts, but most unprepossessing exterior—in a word, Phelim needed to be known in order to be appreciated. Phelim was not as other dogs. He was like a man who could not smile, for in early youth some misfortune had happened to his tail, and that speaking feature of a dog's personality was dumb. It stuck straight out—what there was of it—but Phelim could not wag it. Of his breed what can we say? The white hair of his coat was scanty, so that the pink skin showed through, and a black patch over one eye gave him a villainous look, as of one always—as Mrs. O'Connor put it—"just after comin' out of a foight." Also, he had a way of carrying one ear up and one ear down, that might have been knowing, but was not professional. It will be seen, then, that Phelim's beauty was not like to be his bane. He had, however, certain sterling qualities which will the further appear as our story proceeds.

Phelim had, like most of us, a pet aversion; he regarded the pushing and forward denizens of the kennels on the top of the long sticks with an undying hatred. For one thing, they took up a good deal of his dear mistress's time and attention; for another, they fluttered about him, and confused him, when he was picking one of his rare bones. These were offences not to be forgiven; and Phelim was wise in his generation. He ignored the creatures who tormented him, as much as possible. Well for those of us who can do likewise. To put a disagreeable fact quite aside is a gift; and this gift Norah O'Connor's dog possessed in perfection. Hence, while the obnoxious pigeons were fed, he was wont to sit down flat in the soft, short grass, with his face to the hedge and his back well presented, lift his sharp nose in the air, and commune with his own heart; neither would he budge one inch until he caught the sound of Norah's light footfall going back into the house. To flurry himself and bark at those pitiful objects was evidently quite beneath him. He considered that to be entirely ignored by a respectable dog was a far more biting sarcasm; and though Norah called him never so wisely, not an inch would he turn, not an eyelash would he wink, until the feeding process was over.

But Miss Alison Drew was quite a different matter, and Phelim was quickly at her feet—not wagging his tail for joy, since that was beyond him, but showing by

his glistening eye and loving caresses how glad he was to see her.

"It's Phelim that's glad to see you, Miss Alison, this day," said Norah. "He just worships the ground you walk on; and I'm after beginning to be jealous-minded, I can tell ye. Come in now, ladies, and see how the pillow-work is getting on wid itself."

The two girls followed her into the cottage, Phelim gravely leading the way.

The living-room was small and simple, but clean as a new-made pin; the red-brick floor glowing, the walls here and there ornamented with cheap prints of a religious character, and over the little open fireplace, where in winter the peat burnt hot and pungent, hung a coloured picture of the Holy Mother, that one known as the *Mater Dolorosa*. The lattice window, with its wreaths of climbing roses and its pots of musk inside, stood open, the light falling full upon a tiny round table, on which stood a sturdy cushion bearing a bit of cobweb-like tracery, and countless tiny pins, from which hung bobbins wound with delicate silky thread. The pigeons in their airy home, the bobbins on the pillow, these told the tale of the unusual comfort and plenty in Norah's unpretending home. What Mrs. O'Connor called "the rale gintry" used to come from far and wide to stock their dove-cotes and to ornament their gowns. Besides, was not the altar in the great church in Patrick Street made lovely by a fall of lace, the creation of Norah's own hands?

These things bring profit, and it was whispered that Mary O'Connor's girl was laying by a pretty nest-egg against she should marry the dark-eyed young soldier, Harry Deacon. Of late these whispers had been sinister, for the disgrace that had fallen upon him became known, and it was the general impression that such a pretty colleen should look higher, and "do bhetter for herself entoirely." No one, however, dared say a word to Norah. Proud and reserved upon all that most nearly concerned herself, she went her own way in silence; and no sooner was Private Deacon once more at his place in the ranks, and able to get out of barracks, than she walked the whole stretch of the road by his side on market-day, all through Shandon Valley and on across Patrick's Bridge. True, they had some grave words together as they wandered by the edge of the wood, where the air was sweet with the cooling of the doves, and the scent of the musk was

blown across from the cottage window. True, the big tears dropped like pearls down Norah's cheek, but not even to her garrulous old mother did Norah say one word against her lover; and if he gave her his word and pledge to keep away from the canteen, and nevermore be brought in by the picket of a night, no word of that sacred promise did she breathe to man or woman. It was her secret and Harry's, and when she kissed him, and bade the saints be with him, as he left her that golden summer's evening, he knew the kiss and the blessing were seals to the compact made between them.

But Harry's evil star was in the ascendant. The pledge was broken, made once more, again violated. This was not from any jeering on the part of his comrades. A man who "cast up" at a comrade the fact of having been "on the triangles," would have been lynched, I verily believe, so strong was feeling on the subject. Silence when the punishment was past, was an unwritten law in the ranks, and woe be to the man who transgressed against it—a merciful, a just, a righteous law. There was nothing in his surroundings to drag Harry Deacon down, rather were hands stretched out to raise him up. Hugh Dennison was the Captain of his company, no lazy Captain either, or one to leave all the welfare of the company in the hands of the non-coms. When the Captain of number ten, light company, went round the men's dinners, it was not a case of the Sergeant yelling "Attention," and the officer shouting "Any complaints?" and rushing off before any could possibly be made. Everything pertaining to the men's comfort was carefully looked into; every man felt he had a friend in the "quiet Captain," as they used to call him, from his somewhat stately, gentle manner.

"He's a lamb in peace, and he'd be a lion in war," said a man in canteen one night, and the saying became company's property, and was looked upon as a smart thing. It was told that once, catching a seasoned gamester of a regiment that shall be nameless and numberless, cheating a callow youngster of "Ours" at cards—in fact, indulging in the delightful pastime of "plucking a pigeon"—Hugh Dennison had taken the said warrior gently but firmly by the back of his collar, lifted him bodily out of the club window, and dropped him with delicate precision in the exact centre of a clump of leafy shrubs below.

Manly, almost pleading words of counsel were spoken to Private Deacon by his Captain. The man who could act promptly, could speak to the point, and aptly. He could not bear to see a man go under for lack of warning. Perhaps he would have been highly indignant if any one had suggested that the fact of knowing how deep an interest Miss Drew took in pretty Norah, added a warmth to his own interest in Private Deacon, nevertheless such was the case. Love is like a light that reflects itself in a thousand mirrors; you never know how far its radiance will shine, or into what unlikely corners.

But we are leaving Norah and her two visitors too long over the lace-pillow, in the cottage by the wood.

"Shure an' I took that one from the frost on the pane, that white winter a while ago—an' it's a mighty purty pattern too; but it's hard to do, and work as you may, it's a bit the size of your finger-nail you'll do in a mornin', miss."

"Oh, it's just lovely!" said the Major's golden-haired daughter, full of superlatives as became her young years and enthusiastic nature; "and when it's finished, Norah, and laid on mother's black velvet gown, there won't be a trimming in county Cork to touch it."

Norah smiled at this, showing a rim of pearly teeth; but the look in her eyes never changed—nay, were they not full of a weary, hunted look, such as Alison had never seen there before?

Surely things must be going badly, somehow, with this simple Irish girl who had crept into a warm corner of her heart and nestled there?

Mrs. O'Connor had become bedridden from rheumatism, but enjoyed herself greatly in receiving visits of sympathy from various "gintry" round about, and in the detailing of her many symptoms, freely interspersed with appeals to her many saints, knew no weariness. Clean, spick-and-span was she kept by her daughter's ceaseless care, and held high court in the corner of a little room up a crooked stair-way, and then down two rather unexpected steps.

"Run upstairs, dear," said Alison to her cousin, "and say a word to Mrs. O'Connor while I settle about the lace."

"Say a word—hear a word, you mean," replied the other, laughing. "Why, last time I was up there she told me all about her courting days, and the little pink pig the neighbours clubbed together to give

her as a dowry, and all about Norah here, and how she got bewitched."

"Yes, yes," said Alison, laughing. "We know all about that, don't we, Norah?"

Then Elsie went, and the two women were left alone, looking into each other's faces.

That long look, questioning on the one hand, pitifully, wildly sad on the other, ended in Norah flinging her head upon her arms with a low sobbing cry:

"Oh—my Harry!—my Harry!"

Alison was beside her in a moment, her hand upon the bowed head.

"What is it? Tell me—tell me."

"Arrah, whist, Miss Alison, how can I tell? Shure an' his heart is broke within him, he's not the same boy at all at all, and his eyes look like those of a wild beast—a wild beast that's caught and caged. Ah, Miss Alison, shure and I'm born to sorrow. I've had but a sip of it yet, but the full cup's there ready, and I'll have to be after draining it to the dregs."

Then, with an indescribable gesture of abandonment, the girl gazed at the divine picture of the Mother of Sorrows; then turning, flew to Alison's side.

"Ah, Miss Alison dear, it is meeself that's cruel to burden you wi' the griefs, the half of which I cannot spake of; but my heart's fair fit to burst some days, and there's something in your kind face draws the words from me mouth, and the tears from me eyes, and I feel like a child that clutches at the mother's gown, and looks up in her face for comfort. Shure, Miss Alison dear, you've suffered sore yourself, that knows how to draw out the sorrows of others so well? There, now, bad cess to me, I've driven the colour from your cheek, an' brought the trimble to your lips. Come along wid me, Miss Alison, to the Wishing Well; you're so good and true, so gentle and kind, whatever you wish the blessed saints will take note of, an' we'll wish togither—you an' me—wish wi' all our hearts and sows, and then the thing may come to pass, who knows?"

A moment more and the two were making their way through the wood—thus taking a short cut, instead of going round by the road. The sound of the pigeons' cooing died away, the underwood grew dense, and they had to push the branches aside as they passed. Phelim was in a state of radiant satisfaction. Was it not possible that some lurking little beast—something that scuttled or crawled—might be the object of this sudden raid? No more bloodthirsty being than Phelim lived,



in his own way, and dreams of possible bliss were his, as he rustled and panted through the wood. Presently they came upon a round, open space, from which a pathway ran upwards to the main road.

In the centre of this space was a sight, strange indeed to Sassenach eyes, but familiar enough to those who have sojourned long in Southern Ireland. A small, deep, still pool of water, glistening under a bower of wild rose-bushes, and these bushes covered with tiny shreds and knots of faded ribbon, even of fragments of white cotton, or the ravellings of the rag of a frayed garment. Every knot meant a wish—and Heaven only knew the story of sorrow and longing that each could tell.

"Now wish, Miss Alison, wish with all your tender heart, and the blessed saints hear you this day, for the sake of poor sad Norah. Holy St. Joseph—he's the one will never turn the deaf ear to the wish that's wished with a full heart, an' tied with a true-love knot. Here, take the ribbon from my bosom, Miss Alison. Harry gave it me a long while back, an' it's faded and raved, but what of that? Wish, Miss Alison, darlint, wish for my Harry to be given back to me again, and kept from the evil that lies in wait."

As with trembling fingers Alison tied the poor faded bit of ribbon to a long drooping bough, Norah gave a cry.

"What ails thee, Phelim—is it a sperrit you're after seein', or a leprecaun fighting ye now, ye thafe o' the world?"

Phelim's back was arched like an angry cat's, his sparse hairs stood erect, and his lips were drawn back in a diabolical grin, while he growled fierce and low.

Then came a rustle in the underwood that ran like a sea round the island of space. Alison recognised the scent of a cigar—a recumbent figure rose, and there in the shadow of the overhanging trees stood Captain Ellerton, baring his comely head, and wearing a pleasant smile as he greeted Miss Drew. He also tried his best to greet Phelim, but that perverse animal drew back on all-fours, stiffening himself out in a wildly defiant attitude, and growled with greater malice than before.

"Norah," said Alison.

But when she turned, Norah was gone, and happily Phelim followed his mistress promptly, having delivered himself of one parting yelp of unspeakable disgust.

"That brute makes me long to have a gun handy," said Captain Ellerton, dusting the bits of dried grass from his clothes.

"Oh," said Alison, "it's only Phelim, you know; he lets little things vex him—he doesn't mean any harm."

"It seems to me, Miss Drew, you are making a close study of the native raw material," returned Ellerton, with the faint suggestion of a sneer.

Alison flushed up.

"I hope you don't mean Norah, Captain Ellerton. Norah is my—friend."

He bowed in silence, but the bow was worse than any words.

"It is strange we should meet out here," said Alison presently, as the two paced slowly on side by side.

Captain Ellerton stopped suddenly, obliging Alison to do so too.

"Miss Drew, I must ask you to keep silence as to our meeting. It is important just now—nor am I able to say more. You may have heard a hint dropped by Major Henneker, though I know he is very reserved on all regimental matters. I can only beg of you to be led by my wishes. My very identity must be kept secret from these—friends of yours."

A deep distrust of this man at all times filled Alison's mind, and she knew he was no favourite with the Major and Mrs. Henneker; still, truth and earnestness seemed to speak in his face and voice.

She gave her word; also going surety for her cousin, a more difficult undertaking, for she was a determined chatterbox at all times.

"You will allow me the pleasure of walking home with you?" said Ellerton, and truly Alison could not well say him nay.

Presently Elsie came running up the crooked path from the cottage.

"Norah said you were coming round this way. Oh, Phelim, what a naughty dog!"

For Phelim stood in the gap that led to his home, and made himself look like a ghost-hound in a German ballad.

Happily Elsie made no comment upon Captain Ellerton's presence; she was too well-bred to be afflicted with small curiosities; and besides, her thoughts were full of the marvellous adventures related to her by Mrs. O'Connor.

They talked of Irish superstitions, and Irish fairy-tales, and the time passed merrily enough, until—just when they came under the shadow of the church of sweet bells—Tim darted out into the sunshine like a weasel from behind a stone.

The sight of Captain Ellerton seemed to fill him with most unholy glee. He struck an attitude, and performed a sort of rogue's



march, his skinny arms well out from his sides, his head erect, his mouth cutting his face in two.

"How is Patsey to-day?" said Alison hurriedly, noting the scowl on Ellerton's face. "Tell him I'm coming to see him in a day or two, and have something nice to bring him."

"Patsey's got a kind of a wakeness on him, your honour's ladyship, an' a trimblement in his blessed insaide, so I hear, but this'll be the day he'll smole an' be glad whin I tell him you're thinking of him, the darlint."

Then Tim resumed his interrupted march; and to make matters worse—though the two girls had not the faintest idea how much worse—took to addressing an imaginary army.

"The shadders will be flittin' on the hills whin the moon tops the barn, an' ye'll be all there, me boys. Right—about—face! Quick march."

Then the little wiry voice uprose in a song:

A thousand pikes are flashing  
At the rising of the moon, . . .  
The rising of the moon. . . .

"Is this another of your friends, Miss Drew?" said Ellerton quietly.

Elsie answered for her cousin.

"That is Tim. I'm afraid he is a naughty boy, Captain Ellerton, but we are very fond of him."

"I think I, too, should like to cultivate—Tim. Here, boy, here's a fairing for you."

Slowly on his tip-toes came Tim. His eyes swelled in his head as he saw the new bright shilling in the "gentleman's" hand, and he gave a whoop as he took it in his little dirty fingers, spinning it up into the air to a marvellous height and catching it again, pulled out a long tail or tag of some mysterious garment, tied the coin securely into it, and then set to marching again, this time on his hands, with his spindle-legs in the air.

### CAPTAIN CLEVELAND.

#### THE TRUE STORY OF A REAL PIRATE.

In the advertisement to the first edition of "The Pirate," Sir Walter Scott gave a summary of the "imperfect traditions and mutilated records" of the Orkneys, concerning a certain John Gow, or Goffe, or Smith—out of which traditions he elaborated the romance of Captain Cleveland. His own "veracious narrative," however, Scott declared to have been compiled from materials to which he alone had had access,

and these materials are assumed to have been procured from Bessie Millie, of Stromness, the prototype of Norna of the Fitful Head.

But notwithstanding all this, it is quite possible that Scott had also the aid of Daniel Defoe's account of the Pirate Gow, although only one copy of the original work, published in 1725, is now known to exist—that, namely, in the British Museum. Whether this be so or not, Defoe's work is well worth a little attention. The author of "Robinson Crusoe" had always a fancy for tales of crime, and he was especially familiar with stories of pirates. He wrote numerous accounts and confessions of notorious criminals for "The Original Journal" of John Applebee, and it was during his connection with that journal that he became acquainted with the affairs of Gow. The pamphlet in which he gave the narrative to the world was entitled: "An Account of the Conduct and Proceedings of the late John Gow, alias Smith, Captain of the late Pirates, Executed for Murder and Piracy committed on Board the George Galley, afterwards called the Revenge, with a Relation of all the horrid Murders they committed in Cold Blood. As also of their being taken at the Islands of Orkney and sent up Prisoners to London."

Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to "The Pirate," gives the name of Gow's ship as the "Revenge," although in the novel it is the "Rover" which appears at Kirkwall, with one Goffe in command, Cleveland having lost his own ship off Sumburgh Head.

The disputes in the novel between Goffe and his mates are recalled by Defoe's sage comments on the piratical fraternity generally:

"Tho' they generally put in this or that Man to act as Commander for this or that Voyage or Enterprise, they frequently remove them again upon the smallest Occasion, nay, even without any Occasion at all, but as Humours and Passions govern at those Times."

And in proof that this is done he goes on to say that he once knew a buccaneering vessel with a crew of seventy men, who had so often set up and pulled down captains and officers that over seven-and-forty of them had been in office at some time or other, while no fewer than thirteen had had a turn as captain. In Gow's case, however, he was really the captain, although not in absolute command, being sometimes in peril of deposition by his own officers.

This Gow is described by Defoe as "a superlative, a Capital Rogue," who had

long thought of turning pirate before the opportunity presented itself. After failure in one attempt to demoralise a crew, he shipped as able seaman on board the English ship, "George Galley," of two hundred tons burden, then loading—1724—at Amsterdam for Santa Cruz on the Barbary coast.

The ship was commanded by a Guernsey man called Oliver Ferneau, who was entrusted with a commission by Dutch merchants to collect a cargo of beeswax on the Barbary coast, and convey it to Genoa for sale. The reason why an English ship was employed was because the Dutch were then at war with "the Turks of Algiers," and Ferneau seems to have been a man of credit and repute among the good burghers of Amsterdam. The voyage was a confidential and a risky one, and to remove all trace of the Dutch connection, Ferneau engaged an English crew, including Gow. It would seem, however, that in order to make up his complement of twenty-three hands, the Captain had to ship a few Swedes, two of whom, named Winter and Petersen, turned out as big rascals as Gow himself.

The "George Galley" reached Santa Cruz in September, and the collecting and shipping of the beeswax detained her till the third of November, 1724, when the captain prepared to sail for Genoa. But Gow had been laying his plans, and fostering the discontent of the men about some question of provisions. He had, by his skilful seamanship, been promoted to be second mate, and he allowed Winter and Petersen to take the initiative in mutiny.

The very first night at sea these three worthies persuaded some five more of the crew to combine with them, seize the captain and mate, throw them overboard, take possession of the ship, and "go upon the account;" which is to say, turn pirates. With great circumstantiality Defoe gives all the details of the conspiracy, which we need not follow. It resulted in the captain, mate, and two others being brutally murdered, and in Gow, as second mate, assuming command of the ship, with one Williams as lieutenant. The rest of the crew were afterwards cowed or persuaded into joining in the enterprise.

First, they changed the name of the ship to the "Revenge," and agreed to an equal division of all plunder. Then they overhauled all the guns on deck, and brought up six more which had been held in reserve in the hold in case of trouble with the Algerines. This gave an armament

of eighteen guns fully mounted, and a great deal more than they could efficiently work. Then they put the ship about to cruise off the coasts of Spain and Portugal, in the hope of picking up a ship laden with wine, which they wanted badly.

Their first prize was an English sloop with salt-fish from Newfoundland. This was of no use to them, so they took out the captain and crew, all the anchors, chains, and sails, and whatever else was worth removing, and scuttled her. The next prize was a Scotch vessel bound from Glasgow to Genoa with herrings, and therefore of little use to them, so they sank her also, after removing the crew and all they thought worth plundering.

For a fortnight they had no success at all, and then they began to get short of water, as well as wine. So they ran for Madeira, and after cruising about for a few days in hope of capturing a wine-ship, put boldly into the Portuguese port of Porto Santo. There they ran up the English flag, and made such a brave show that the Governor and some of the principal people came off to visit the captain. Gow received them in state, but would not allow them to go ashore again until he obtained all the provisions and water he demanded. With such hostages, of course, the pirates easily got all they wanted, and they soon set sail again, after landing the terrified officials, with a consolatory present of beeswax out of the cargo of the Dutch merchants.

Running back to the Spanish coast, they next captured an American vessel bound for Lisbon with staves. She was of no more use to them than the previous captures, but offered an opportunity of getting rid of some of their prisoners. They took out the American crew and replaced them with the crew of the Newfoundland, to whom they made liberal presents of the beeswax, for which the pirates had no market.

Shortly afterwards they captured a French vessel laden with fruit and wine, which was what they wanted. So they stood out to sea with their prize until they got to a safe distance, transhipped as much of the wine and fruit as they could stow, took out all the ammunition and the best of the sails, etc., removed the French crew, and made a present of what remained to the Glasgow captain whose ship they had sunk, and the American captain whose ship they had given to the Newfoundlanders. It cannot be denied that there is some element of humour in these rough acts of what they called justice.

Their next encounter was not so fortunate—for them. This was with a large French merchant-ship, with thirty-two guns and a crew of eighty, besides many passengers. Gow declared that she was too strong for them to attack, and most of the men agreed with him, but Williams, the lieutenant, who was a blood-thirsty kind of creature, full of reckless courage, insisted upon fighting the Frenchman. A quarrel ensued in which Williams tried to shoot Gow, and a characteristic scene followed, as thus related by Defoe:

"Winter and Petersen standing nearest to Williams and seeing him so furious, flew at him immediately, and each of them fir'd a pistol at him, one shot him thro' the Arm and the other into his Belly, at which he fell, and the men about him laid hold of him to throw him overboard, believing he was dead; but as they lifted him up he started violently out of their hands and leaped directly into the Hold, and from thence run desperately into the Powder Room, with his Pistol cock'd in his Hand, swearing he would blow them all up; and had certainly done it, if they had not seized him just as he had gotten the Scuttle open, and was that moment going in to put his hellish Resolution in practice."

Williams was then clapped into irons. The big Frenchman was avoided, but presently a fish-laden Bristol ship was captured, and into her, after the usual removals, they put the crew of the French wine-ship and let them go. They also sent Williams as a prisoner, with directions to the French skipper to deliver him to the first English man-of-war they should meet with, "in order to his being hang'd for a Pirate." These curious transfers were what Defoe calls "a strange Medley of Mock Justice made up of Rapine and Generosity blended together."

This Williams was really an inhuman monster, and the worst of the gang, who, indeed, seem to have been shocked and sobered by some of his bloody proposals. They were glad to get quit of him, but they were to meet him again in a fashion they little anticipated, for the captain of the Bristol ship duly delivered him to the captain of an English warship at Lisbon, who brought him home to England just about the same time as Gow and his confederates were being brought to justice themselves.

After parting from the Bristol ship, Gow quickly realised that the report she carried would make these waters too hot for them. He knew there was a man-of-war in the

Tagus, which would soon be after them. So after many consultations and wild proposals, Gow's plan was adopted of running for the North of Scotland, where he was born and bred, and where he assured the men of lots of plunder on shore if they could not meet with any prizes on the sea. This plan was the more readily adopted that the crew were again getting short of provisions and water.

There was some ingenuity in Gow's plan of ravaging the Orkneys, for he knew not only where the best houses were near the shore and absolutely unguarded, but also that much time must elapse before news of their doings could reach the Government and bring a warship to Ultima Thule. But, as usual with men who play desperate games, he had omitted to count all the chances.

About the middle of January, 1725, the "Revenge" cast anchor in Carristown Harbour, Orkney, under the lee of a small island, and Gow coached his men in the story they were to tell the Orcadians, and the kind of language they were to use in converse with the people. Had they observed all Gow's directions, says Defoe, there is no doubt they could have done all the mischief they intended, and escaped with ease before the country became alarmed.

A couple of ships put into the harbour before they had matured their plans, and as the pirates wanted to stay awhile in port, they did not plunder, but bartered for wine, and brandy, and ropes, and other goods, with the Dutchmen's beeswax. It is not quite clear how they accounted for the possession of this cargo, for the story they had devised for the Orcadians was that they were bound from Cadiz to Stockholm and Danzig, but had missed the Sound by reason of ice and strong winds, and had been driven so far to the northward that they needed an overhaul as well as to procure water and provisions. The story was a plausible one—except that cargoes of beeswax are not usually brought from Cadiz. This little inconsistency, however, does not seem to have struck the Orcadians, who were quite willing to trade with the strangers.

One thing that Gow omitted to take into account was that some of his crew were practically pressed-men, who had concurred in the piratical enterprise merely to save their own necks. Ten of these one day slipped quietly into the long-boat and made for the mainland, where they eventually arrived, only to be arrested and sent prisoners to Edinburgh. Another

man who was sent ashore for some purpose slipped away to a farmhouse, hired a horse and rode to Kirkwall, where he surrendered himself to the authorities and disclosed the whole design of Gow. The word was passed through the islands, and the gentlemen whose houses were included in Gow's scheme of plunder, were warned to put their places in a state of defence. The curious thing is that Gow did not take alarm at these desertions and put to sea at once. Instead of doing that, he determined on a bold stroke.

He organised a night attack on the house of the Sheriff of the county, Mr. Honeyman of Grahamsay, who happened to be from home at the time. Mrs. Honeyman and her daughter, with considerable dexterity, managed to escape with all the money and the Sheriff's papers, but the pirates plundered all the plate and whatever else they could carry off, and finding that one of the servants played the bagpipes, they forced him to march along in front and pipe them back to the boats.

They judged it prudent to weigh anchor the morning after this exploit, and they cruised among the islands for a few days, picking up what they could. Then they ran for the Island of Eda, where lived a Mr. Fea, a gentleman of considerable estate, with whom Gow had been at school, and whose house he had made up his mind to rob. He counted upon Fea having been drawn to Carriestown by the report of the deserter, but Fea had been detained at home by the illness of his wife and proved more than a match for Gow. Fea sent off a message to Gow, requesting him not to fire any guns to alarm his sick wife, and saying that if his old schoolfellow had not turned pirate, as had been reported, he would be glad to supply him with such necessaries as his island afforded.

In running in, however, Gow's seamanship was for once at fault, and getting his ship into a strong tidal current he very nearly had her ashore. He only saved her from wreck by dropping anchor in the Sound, but in such a position that he could neither sail out again nor heave off, the ship having no boat left big enough for the purpose. Gow's answer to Fea's letter, then, was a demand for the use of a big boat with an anchor, to enable him to get the "Revenge" out of her perilous position. Fea had such a boat, but on getting the message he quietly scuttled her, and hid all her gear.

Gow's next move was to send a boat's

crew ashore armed to the teeth, who made straight for the Mansion House. Fea met them in a conciliatory manner, and mildly requested them not to go to the House on account of the illness of Mrs. Fea, but invited them to a neighbouring tavern to discuss matters. The pirates went willingly enough, but at the same time gave Fea to understand that if he did not supply the boat required by Gow, he had nothing to expect from them but "the utmost extremity."

Mr. Fea behaved with great coolness and cunning. He went alone with the pirates to the tavern, but on the way managed to give orders to some of his people to step down to the beach, and remove the oars, the mast, and sail, from the pirates' boat, and then after a while to call him out of the room suddenly. This was done, and the pirates, befuddled with liquor, were all captured and sent away under guard. Messengers were sent out to alarm the country, and bonfires were lighted at night on the hills, which seeing, Gow endeavoured to set sail and make off. But a gale had set in, and before he could get way on the ship she was driven ashore. Here the crew were effectually prisoners, for the only boat they had had been captured by Fea.

Gow was not beaten, however, and it would be very difficult to take him where he was. This he knew, and began to negotiate with Fea, offering a thousand pounds in goods for the use of men and boats to get his ship afloat again. Fea temporised, and on various pretexts about the boat, got the crew ashore by twos and threes, and made prisoners of them all, including Gow. The various stratagems employed by Fea were exceedingly ingenious, but he also displayed great personal courage, for the pirates were heavily armed, and in the position of desperate men in peril of their lives.

"It was indeed," says Defoe, "a most agreeable sight to see such a Crew of desperate Fellows so tamely surrender to a few almost naked Countrymen, and to see them circumvented by one Gentleman, and were rendered quite Useless to themselves and to their own Destruction; the want of a Boat was as much to them as an actual Imprisonment, nay, they were indeed in Prison in their ship, nor was they able to stir one way or other, Hand or Foot; it was too Cold to swim over to the Island and seize the Boat, and if they had, unless they had done it immediately at first, the



People on Shore would have been too strong for them, so that they were as secure on board the Ship, as to any Escape they could have made, as they were afterwards in the Condemn'd Hold in Newgate."

At the same time one cannot but marvel how men of such evident boldness could have so simply "given themselves away" as they did in their whole proceedings at Eda. "Nothing but men infatuated to their own Destruction," as good Daniel says, "and condemn'd by the visible Hand of Heaven to an immediate surprise," could have been so stupid as they showed themselves.

Thus ended their desperate undertaking, however, and all through the gallant and crafty Mr. Fea with some five or six followers.

Being now safely in custody, all that remained was to get the pirates conveyed to the place of trial. The distance being so great, there was considerable delay. At last orders came to send the prisoners by land to Edinburgh, and thence by the frigate "Greyhound" to the Thames. Before they met their doom nearly half a year elapsed.

The "Greyhound" arrived at Woolwich with the prisoners on the twenty-sixth of March, 1725, and a few days later they were conveyed under strong guard to the Marshalsea Prison. And in the Marshalsea Gow and his gang found "Lieutenant" Williams, who had just preceded them by a few days, having been brought from Lisbon in the frigate "Argyle."

The trial took up some time, as evidence had to be taken of the relative degrees of guilt of the prisoners, five of whom turned King's evidence. Gow maintained a sullen demeanour, and although he showed no sign of repentance, he also showed no sign of fear. He refused to plead, and was therefore condemned to torture after the law of the period, but the sight of the apparatus terrified him into confession, or rather into pleading. He was then tried in due form and found guilty.

The evidence against Williams was that of the whole crew, so that these two, with Winter, Petersen, and four others, were all hanged together on the eleventh of June, 1725. Defoe notes that "Gow, as if Providence had directed that he should be twice hanged, his crimes being of a twofold Nature and both Capital, soon he was turned off, fell down from the Gibbet, the Rope breaking by the weight of some that pulled his leg to put him out of pain; he was still alive and sensible,

tho' he had hung Four Minuter, and able to go up the Ladder the second time, which he did with very little Concern and was hang'd again; and since that a Third Time, viz. in Chains over-against Greenwich, as Williams is over-against Blackwall."

Thus shockingly ended the career of this desperado, over whom the genius of Scott has thrown a halo of romance. There was a real romance in his life and death if we are to believe Orcadian tradition, which says that while in the Orkneys Gow engaged the affections of a young lady named Gordon, who plighted troth with him at the Stone of Odin, one of the Stones of Stennie. She followed Gow up to London after his arrest, but too late to see him before his execution. She requested a sight of his dead body, and touching his hand formally resumed the troth-plight, in obedience to the Scotch superstition of the time, which would otherwise have doomed her to the visitations of the ghost of her dead lover.

Mr. Fea does not seem to have profited by his gallantry in capturing the pirates. Sir Walter Scott says he did not receive any reward from Government, but another account says he received one thousand one hundred pounds from the State, three hundred pounds for salvage, and four hundred pounds as a testimonial of gratitude from London merchants. All this and more, however, was lost in a series of law-suits brought against him by Newgate solicitors in the name of Gow and others of the pirate crew, so that he was ultimately ruined. In desperation he joined the rebellion of '45, and by way of reward had his house burned down by the Hanoverians.

### THREE DAYS IN LAKELAND.

It is wonderful how much of a picturesque district one may see in three days if there are mountain-tops or high church steeples sown over the district. I had three days to spare in the course of my journey from the Land o' Cakes to John Bull's metropolis, and so I left the express at Carlisle, packed off my luggage to Preston, and, with just a cartridge-case full of night-gear, prepared for a refresher in Lakeland.

The day was divine when I started from Keswick—though perhaps a little late to begin a walk to Buttermere. In fact, it was five o'clock. But to my mind it was the very hour for the enterprise. The evening clear-



ness was coming upon the mountains, and great Skiddaw raised his bulk heavenwards close at hand with most alluring lucidity.

I hurried through Keswick, and rested only at Crosthwaite's charming little church, where Southey lies. Some people think Southey's life and end very melancholy. I can scarcely fancy they were that. He must have feasted on happiness every day of his life on which he set foot outside his studious retreat. I take leave further to believe that there is a certain felicity in madness, and its milder stages down to mere imbecility, which only the mad and imbecile can know. Be that as it may, Crosthwaite is a sweet spot to moulder in. Quite lately I had visited the Royal burial-places of the Kings of Sweden and the Kings of Denmark. The contrast was tremendously on the side of the poet. If disembodied spirits come back to earth, the immortal parts of the Lakeland poets must have some agreeable hours—supposing they have not lost their appreciation of Nature's moods.

From Crosthwaite I turned by the head of the lake, with my face towards England's grandest group of mountains, and prepared for some dust. I was not, however, prepared for so much dust as I swallowed perforce.

To begin with, there was a brisk breeze from the mountains, which rustled the tree-tops and shook the bracken in the pretty woods south of Portinscale; and, to end with, the road was fearfully populous with excursionists' brakes returning from Buttermere. These brakes were all of the same description in their cargo. Some two-score young and middle-aged women were in each, attended by one minister, at most two ministers. And they sang hymns with fervour. I wonder the horses stood it. Doubtless, however, the poor brutes were more concerned about the gradients of this exacting road.

Ten times in succession, I should think, did that classic canticle, "Hold the Fort," strike upon my ear. I could hardly see the songsters in certain parts of the road: they rattled upon me in such a whirlwind of dust.

At the "Newlands Inn" four brakeloads of these votaries were in waiting. They chanted even while they stood still—yet not all, for mild non-intoxicating drinks were passing freely among them; and their ministerial guardians mopped their faces.

At last I got out of their neighbourhood, and I make no shame in saying I thanked Heaven for it. I was alone

with these noble mountains in their many colours, with the fast paling sky overhead, the tinkle of waterfalls in my ears, and the sweet smell of distant hay completing my sensual pleasure. It is odd how civilised man gets inebriated at times by Dame Nature's surpassing beauty. For my part, I could have sung as heartily as my friends on the highway. This glorious environment of grey and red rock, green bracken and strong mountain outlines under a cloudless sky, was too much for my ordinary composure.

But the hour grew late. The sun sank quite below the horizon, and the dun pallor of early night set. And still I was among the mountains. I had taken matters too easily. It behoved me to waste no time in rhapsodies about the charm of the vista up Whiteless Pike's ravine to the right, but to hurry down Buttermere Hause as fast as possible. The dear old valley was below, with the sombre lake glistening strangely beneath its mighty sentinels of Red Pike, High Stile, and High Crag. Ten years had sped since I was last here. I had forgotten all about the Fair Maid of Buttermere and all the rest of it in the meanwhile. Now it all came back to me in a flood of memory.

The village has not appreciably grown since 1883. It still numbers fewer than a hundred inhabitants, all told; and its tiny church has not been ousted by a modern building designed for ten times the present population. I found out these things after I had supped in Rigg's Hotel. My cigar did fairly well in fight with the midges. The air was warm, yet inevitably moist. It would have to be the very fiend of a drought to rob Buttermere vale of its natural humidity. There was no moon, and but few stars. Yet such stars as there were sufficed to bring out the majesty of the Buttermere mountains, brooding so formidably in the gloom over the now black waters of the lake. It was all very calm and soothing, but a thought melancholy, and so I returned to the hotel and gossiped with my landlord for the concluding hour of the day. Mr. Rigg is a man worth talking to. He has the history and legends of Buttermere at his fingers' ends. He, like his fathers before him, is Buttermere born and bred. But he is man of the world enough to think but lightly of the romance that has gathered about the name of the Buttermere beauty. Her tale was a very ordinary one, and her face was—according to Mr.

Rigg's forbears, who knew her well—nothing so much out of the common.

But gossip soon gave way to sleep, and the next day I was called early—to look out upon a world of grey mist and to hear the trickle of water-drops in the gutter-spout outside my bedroom.

This would have seemed to me most calamitous ten years ago. I should then at once have rushed to the conclusion that the day was destined to be bad all through. Now I knew better. I had increased in my knowledge of Nature as well as of men. And so I dressed and breakfasted and began my matutinal weed, content to bide my time. It was about an even chance whether the clouds would lift or stay.

And towards noon, sure enough, they lifted. They did not go up with a leap; but the lazy eddy skywards was enough for me. Besides, I was prepared for at least one drenching in my three days' jaunt. Why should it not come on that stony pass of Scarf Gap, which ten years ago I had thought so fine, though then I had crossed it in a fog which hid it utterly?

A hasty luncheon and I was off.

The gnats were loose when I turned towards Hasnass, the pretty residence on the east shore of the lake. The perfume of firs and wet heather and many flowers was in the air. Though close and calm, there was a bracing feel in the dampness. I was, however, prepared to lose a certain number of pounds in my trudge over Scarf Gap and Black Sail. It was just the day for that sort of thing.

And lose them I did. The gradient of the walk is pretty tough all through, and the going is the roughest of the rough in places. If I had an old and very dear pair of boots to which I wished to give the "coup de grâce" in the most honourable manner without leaving England, I would take train with them to Wordsworth's country and go from Buttermere to Wasdale in them. They should then have dignified burial, for no tramp would be likely to look upon them with the eye of favour after the excursion.

I was delighted with the solitude I had for company. Between the hotel and Scarf Gap I saw but two human beings—a little girl who, with her thumb touching in her mouth, opened a certain gate for me and looked for a copper, and a little lad, her brother, who at the imagined sound of wheels from the Honister direction, scampered madly back to the gate with the frenzied cry, "They're a-coming." The

boy referred to a new edition of excursionists in brakes. This spurred me on. Should I or should I not be able to cross the head of the lake ere they came in sight? It was, however, a false alarm. I was grateful. I wanted no more of their dust and hymns for the present.

It was distinctly tiresome to have the mist down again thicker than ever ere I was half up Scarf Gap. But it was not a very wetting mist, and it could not hide from view the bold nearer rocks and the masses of parsley fern growing between the rocks.

I remember ten years ago with what avidity we had yearned to see the Pillar Mountain, with its deadly little protrusive spike, and how the mist had cheated us. It was much the same now, only I did not now take so much interest in the Pillar Rock. During the last ten years I have seen a good many natural wonders more thrilling than this little homicidal stump.

Only a brace of tourists between Buttermere and Wasdale, and in the holiday season, too! It seemed to me remarkable. But I was glad of it, of course. They were very happy-looking, inoffensive persons, seated in the midst of a fine drizzle of rain by the bridge over the Liza, on the dividing line between Black Sail and Scarf Gap, eating sandwiches and trifling with a flask. I should have paid them no manner of distinct civility had I met them in Keswick, the Strand, or even in Buttermere village. Here it was different. We exchanged remarks for about a minute and a half, and then I left them. The younger of them said: "We shall soon catch you up," whereupon I assured myself that it should be odd if they did. They did not.

In my opinion there is nothing finer in England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales than the view from the head of Black Sail towards Wasdale. If you can see next to nothing, except about two-thirds of the bulk of the adjacent mountains, so much the better—at least, if you have a fairly strong imagination. Glencoe is, of course, grand, and so is Slieve League in Donegal, and the view down the Capel Curig side of Snowdon from the neck of Crib Goch. I dare say, really, all three are mightier than this Black Sail outlook. But when I was on Black Sail I thought otherwise.

Half an hour later I was in the Wasdale Hotel, that used to be "Auld Will Ritson's," and quite ready for a second luncheon. I was tolerably damp, but far from soaked.

The weather looked brighter here,

strange to say. It was not too menacing to hinder a large party of carriage people from picnicking frigidly on the stony shores of the Mosedale Beck, just outside the hotel. For all that, the lake in the distance had an angry air, and the clouds were still low on Lingmell, which is the stepping-stone to Sca Fell from little Wasdale.

Wasdale village, like Buttermere, has grown but little during the past decade. The hotel has tacked on a wing, and I believe a new school-house has been built. Otherwise it is as it was. It is a mystery why they have not run a railway into the glen from Drigg or one of the other coast towns. But it is a mystery I for one don't want to see explained away in an emphatic realisation of the idea. It is still the romantic, depressing little nook it always has been since Nature in England ended her last great shuffle of materials. I talked on the subject with the wife of the Vicar. "Bored" does not express her state of mind, poor aspiring lady! She showed me the church and sold me a photograph of it, while she told with a certain fixed melancholy about the joys of life in Wasdale in winter. The living is worth but sixty pounds a year, which is at least as bad for a lady as a lack of congenial society.

After my second luncheon the weather looked altogether kinder. The clouds had gone above Lingmell, nor was red-sided Kirk Fell at all obscured. I had still plenty of energy in me, and so I set out to tackle the Screees, which fall so sharply into Wastwater on the southern shore. But on close acquaintance the Screees—like so many of our brother bipeds—prove not nearly so formidable as they look. They are rugged enough in all conscience, and bad for boots; but they do not induce vertigo, nor is it at all easy to fall plump from their sides into the lake. I found a quantity of bilberries among the rocks, the stag's-horn moss, and parsley fern, and enjoyed them. I also enjoyed a very enticing view into Eskdale behind. Burnmoor Tarn, which few methodical tourists get a sight of, was quite near. It is one of the loneliest of the Lakeland tarns—and one of the least beautiful.

On my descent late in the afternoon I looked into Wasdale's little school-house. The building seats nineteen children. But their forms knew them not at that hour. Save for their desks and seats, a small easel, a map of England and a map of the World, a desk for the pedagogue, and some school-

books, the little place was empty. In the winter time there must be days when the attendance here is very meagre.

I do not care very much for the Wasdale Hotel. But I found diversion after dinner in the visitors' books, of which there is quite a library, and in which I read the impressions of tourists who had their sensibilities stirred here before I was born.

The Wasdale natives do not treat these travellers' outpourings with much respect. They seem to amuse themselves in the winter with scribbling uncomplimentary interjections and comments over and under them. They appear especially "down upon" the University men who come here for the vacations, and gush over their various mountain exploits. But they do not confine their malign attentions to the undergraduates.

Really, however, some of these tourists' notes are a trifle "de trop." In 1859, for example, a certain gentleman with the Christian name of Peter writes as follows: "Just returned from Australia, having sailed thirteen times round the world and crossed the equator thirty times; have lived five years in Geelong, Victoria, and feel all the better for it." How is this for an "à propos de bottles"? One may excuse the commentator who remarks, "Better go back"; or even the more acrid person who has scrawled across the writing the words: "No one feels interested the least although he has been so far from his mother."

For my part, I like better the tone of the good lady's observation which memorialises August the twenty-eighth, 1858: "The quietude and serenity of this beautiful Wastdale makes one's inward soul glad in the extreme." It is not irreproachable grammar nor irreproachable sense; but the sentence compels sympathy.

To resume my narrative, however. I gave word that I would rise soon after the lark the next morning if the sky was blue. The sky was very blue, but they did not call me before seven o'clock, which is surely late for the lark.

Everything looked in train for a brilliant day. I rejoiced that I had the very irreducible minimum of impedimenta. Under such a sky every ounce tells, especially when a mountain is in the day's programme.

I realised this almost as soon as I started. I crossed the dale, scaled one of those diabolical Cumberland walls—with their traps of alder twigs at the

summit—and with difficulty descended on the other side. After this the Mosedale Beck was easy, and so I found myself among the bracken of Lingmell. The ascent here is awfully steep, but otherwise straightforward enough for a man with absolutely no sense of locality.

The first half-hour was by far the hardest of the day, which I made fairly long ere I brought myself to an anchor. But it was excellent discipline. Afterwards I was in tip-top condition, and when I halted for the night at Skelwith I could easily have walked on to Windermere.

This is the conventional ascent of Sca Fell and Sca Fell Pike. You cannot well break a bone over it, unless on the Pike's cumbered summit you get your leg in a hole and snap it like gingerbread. I scarcely think it can be improved upon. It gives a broad view of Wastwater—to-day bare and peaceful—and leads you to the base of Sca Fell and the Pike at the same time, so as to impress you very keenly with an idea of the boldness of these heights. If, as I did, you climb up Brown Tongue when the crags of Sca Fell are in shadow, you cannot fail of a thrill in looking at them. They are so very black and so very steep. Of course, though, they are not unscalable. You may see that from the Wasdale Hotel visitors' book, if not with the naked eye. All the same, they are not to be tackled by the tourist fresh from town, and without previous experience as a cragsman.

I was in no hurry. Brown Tongue's slope was so attractive that twice I lay full length on it and smoked a cigarette while I stared at the speckless blue sky. The solitude was supreme, and I had whisky in my flask. Like Rousseau and other great men, I find I think my best thoughts among the mountains. I thought a surprising number of them on this occasion. Unfortunately, I made a note of not one of them.

There is no mistaking the summit of Sca Fell Pike, which I chose for my goal rather than the lower Sca Fell. It is a huge mound of slabs of the green slate, the debris of which bestrewn the mountain-top in an amazing manner. Many a hobnailed boot had scratched the rocks in the efforts of their owners to attain the desirable elevation on its apex. Of this green slate as good razor edges might be made as those furnished by the obsidian of the Peak of Tenerife.

You may guess what a royal day it was

when I say that it was warm even on Sca Fell Pike's cairn. I forgot to button up my coat, and feasted my eyes on the mountain-tops here, there, and everywhere. You may go far about the world to discover a more bewitching association of greys, purples, and bright crimson than Great Gable shows from Sca Fell Pike on a day like this. Great Gable is the object best worth seeing from England's monarch hill. It has a very notable precipice on this side, which looks as if it were dyed with the blood of innumerable victims to the lust of "vaulting ambition."

From Sca Fell Pike, at length, I struck down for Langdale. It is a goodish step, and in parts bad going. Rossett Gill, which I took by the way, is one of the coarsest bits in Lakeland. But Bow Fell, hard by, offers much compensation for its ruggedness.

I reached the "Langdale Hotel" considerably late for luncheon, but that did not deter me from eating luncheon. Here I saw the most poetic maiden face that met me in Cumberland. Its owner's name was Jane, and she was born in Borrowdale. She had dreamy grey eyes which it did one good to look at; and she had further a sweet expression and the quietest voice I ever heard in a girl. In her movements she was slow to distraction, and her sweet smile and her grey eyes were like oil upon the waves of impatience. Borrowdale Jane, long may you retain your present seductive exterior, and may your fate be far brighter than that of Mary of Buttermere! I ought, however, to add that Jane's nose was of a shape unfit to associate with her physical excellences.

From Langdale it is a fair step on to Skelwith, and as beautiful an one as you can imagine. Elter Water, as I saw it with the shimmering of the evening mist upon it, and the sun yet stoutly above the horizon, was a sight to start a procession of high-flown adjectives. An hour later Skelwith received me; but I lay by Brathay's pellucid stream for long ere yielding to the hotel's temptations.

Of the next morning I need say nothing. I did but walk to Ambleside, and then to Windermere; and from bright but Philistinish Windermere I took train to Preston, where my traps waited me.

Cumberland has many joys for mortals in its charming bounds. But the mortals ought to be fairly strong in limb and wind, and with good boots, to taste these joys aright.



## AN OMNIBUS STORY.

SELDOM nowadays is the spectacle of the present writer ascending to the top of an omnibus witnessed by the British public. Whether on account of its rarity, the performance is regarded with a larger share of interest than it perhaps intrinsically merits, it is not for me to say. I only know that of late years I have become painfully aware that my figure is not seen to the best advantage while engaged in athletic exercise, far less when suspended in mid-air. There is an inelegant bulk and rotundity about it unsuited to activity, nor, parenthetically, does it accommodate itself readily to narrow seats and cramped positions. Therefore I especially abstain from bringing it into conspicuous contrast against the sky-line at such an elevation as the act in question necessitates.

Nevertheless, on a recent occasion, the weather being favourable and the inside of the vehicle full, I was tempted to take advantage of the facilities which modern improvements offer for reaching the roof by means of the winding stair. And it is the unexpected experience of that journey which lures me into this desultory gossip. But for the contrivance alluded to, I fear I should never again have enjoyed that most delightful point of observation formerly known as the "knife-board," but now too often converted into "garden seats." Who that has ever travelled on the top of a 'bus, say from Mile End via Holborn and Oxford Street to Shepherd's Bush, or by the Strand and Piccadilly to West Kensington, can fail to be struck by the marvellous sight of men, manners, and customs he then looks down on? Such a microcosm of humanity is unequalled by any city in the world, and but for the familiarity of it, would provoke daily wonder. To the youngster it passes unheeded, but for the oldster, like this individual, it has peculiar and sentimental attractions.

For, luckily or unluckily, as the case may be, he is just old enough to remember the first line of omnibuses that ever traversed the London thoroughfares in July, 1829—they were one year earlier in Paris. His infantile memory has faintly recorded and stowed away in one of the remote pigeon-holes of that antique bureau which he dignifies by the name of "his brain," a feeble picture of Mr. Shillibeer's vehicle. He can dimly realise in his mind's eye what a low-roofed, narrow,

stuffy, inconvenient, jolting machine it was, with no seats outside except like those of the stage-coach, one beside the driver, and four close behind him, and how coachman and conductor were habited in uniform with a stiff, bell-crowned, be-corded, and be-tasselled beaver cap, straight-peaked, on the model of the Prussian infantry head-gear of the period. He can recall how, starting from the "Wheat-sheaf" tavern at Paddington, then a thoroughly rural suburb, and pulling up for a minute at the ill-favoured "Yorkshire Stingo" as it turned out of the Edgware Road, "The Omnibus" ran to the Bank by way of the New Road, now the Marylebone, passed the then recently finished Regent's Park, and by St. Pancras Church to Battle Bridge, which, long since turned into King's Cross, was faced on the site of the Great Northern terminus by the London Fever Hospital, and defaced by a life-sized plaster effigy of George the Fourth, surmounting a nondescript kind of obelisk or kiosque—how the 'bus laboured slowly up Pentonville Hill to the "Angel," at Islington, and then descending to the City Road, after crossing the New River, it reached its destination at the Bank through Finsbury and Moorgate—fares, one shilling inside and sixpence out.

Curious and interesting as it always is thus to look back, I found my mood on the occasion of my recent journey sympathetically encouraged by the driver.

I liked the look of him as he pulled up at Piccadilly where I was waiting. He was an elderly man, but hale and hearty, with a genial smile and a ruddy glow about his face, due to the constant exposure to all weathers. His occupation was a hard and sedentary one, but, given a good constitution, there is nothing more healthy. His clear blue eye caught mine, and we seemed to establish a distant acquaintance on the spot.

"Full inside, sir," says the conductor, as I jostled through the crowd to the entrance.

"Then I'll go out," and in a fit of desperation, and remembering the driver's eye, I catch hold of the bright handrail, and, regardless of appearances, up I go, muttering a fervent prayer that I shall not be observed. As soon as I am landed at the top of the winding stair, of course the 'bus starts immediately. I have a momentary vision of my form taking a somersault into a passing dust-cart, and of beholding the world for a second or two upside down; but this air-drawn terror is quickly dis-



pelled by a rap on the knee and a strain on the wrist as I grasp at a bar. No, I am still on the roof, though in a wholly undignified attitude, as was to be expected.

All the garden-seats are occupied save one in the front, and I make for this with the staggering gait of a man on board ship in a storm. By a series of jerks, bounds, clutches at coat-collars, and concussion against other passengers' shoulders, I gain at last the haven of rest, and sink into it gratefully, to find, according to the new arrangement, that although close to the driver, the seat is no longer beside him but higher, and a little to his left rear, with a protecting handrail in front. Once there the position is agreeable enough, if there was but a trifle more leg room. I had looked forward, as in the old days, to a chat with my friendly official on the box, and said as much in his ear.

"Not been up on one of these 'buses before, sir?" enquired the man.

"No, and I don't like it," I reply; "seems to me top-heavy—might capsize at any moment if anything went wrong. I have noticed most of these garden-seated 'buses overhang the wheels. That can't be right; their equilibrium must be very ticklish; the centre of gravity might be easily lost."

"Just so, sir; I have often thought as much; but we must take things as they come in this world."

"But you don't like it, do you? Not so handy for talking to your passengers?"

"No, sir, no; I am all alone in my glory, as you may say, but a little intelligent conversation wiles away the time, you know, sir—shortens the journey considerable—and parties don't seem inclined to gossip now they are perched up so far behind one."

"Driven a 'bus long?" I ask.

"On and off these forty year, sir."

"Good many changes in that time even," I say; "but you can't remember as many in the omnibus line as I can," and then, with the garrulity of my years, I inundate him with a flood of my reminiscences. This leads to a comparison of notes, mutual corrections on small points, such as dates, routes, and so on, and many comments on the recent marvellous increase of traffic and population.

"What it's coming to and what it will be in a few years is more than I can say, or anybody else," adds the coachman. "Lucky they have opened up wider roads where they can; but they'll all be too narrow by-and-by. There now, see here."

We were reaching the Knightsbridge Road near the Albert Gate, and the cross traffic from William Street into the Park occasioned a block in a moment. When we moved again it was marvellous to see the skill of most drivers in steering clear of even a scratch of a wheel, though with but a hair's breadth to spare.

Presently a cab does touch us.

"Ah! stupid!" shouts my friend at the offender, who of course retorts surlily: "Where are you a-coming, then?"

"Go on, you old Guy Fawkes, don't talk to your betters," is the reply, which again provokes the surly one to further speech:

"You—why, you want your 'air jolly well gnawed—that's what you want—you'd be the better for that," and so forth. I only wish I could remember a quarter of the various styles of chaff bandied about; all at the top of the speakers' voices and with shouts and derisive calls as if in the direst anger, but in reality with perfect good-humour.

"I can't quite recollect, though you can, sir, no doubt," resumed the man as we got clear again, "all the demolitions on the City routes—specially those in Holborn, before New Oxford Street gave us a straight run through; I mean when the 'buses had to pass round by the Church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, as I am told."

"Oh, yes," I answered, "there was a hideous pile of filthy tenements just across what is now the wide open entrance to Dudley Street and Shaftesbury Avenue, and another similar narrowing block at Middle Row opposite the end of Gray's Inn Lane. Dyott Street, the Rookeries of Old Bloomsbury and St. Giles's, the cut-throat holes and corners round about the present site of Hart Street and Mudie's Library, all are well within my memory. Of course you yourself have experienced the perils to man and beast on Holborn and Snow Hills before the Viaduct was built. What an abominable nuisance that dip down and up used to be—putting on the skid at the top, taking it off at the bottom, and yoking a third horse on to drag the 'bus up the greasy slope opposite. And talking of slippery roads, which do you prefer, asphalt or wood?"

"Neither, sir. Give me the old Mac-Adam; well kept, there's nothing like it. Nolay and jolting—yes, very likely, but I'm looking at it as a coachman. As for asphalt—that's an invention of the old 'un. It cost more horseflesh than any

one thing could do ; wood is bad enough, but nothing to t'other."

Being a passenger and not a driver I foresaw a difference of opinion on this point, and as I knew my ground might be untenable, I turned the conversation, and went on :

"By-the-bye, I can recall perfectly seeing a Lord Mayor's Show once when I was a boy from a window in the block of houses that stood exactly on the three-cornered open place in front of the Royal Exchange—where the Duke of Wellington's statue now is. That was before the old Exchange was burnt in 1838."

Fortunately a stop was put to my endless reminiscences by a regiment of volunteers with their band rounding the corner of Sloane Street. When our talk was renewed, it turned on modern citizen soldiery, the adoption of the present helmets and tunics for the police, in place of their old tall glaze-crowned hats and swallow-tails, and the general change in all uniforms, especially the Guards' white ducks, worsted epaulettes, and the universal wearing of beards, and so on, after the Crimean War.

The war is a cue which starts my friend off again at full tilt.

"Dear me, yes," says he, "five-and-thirty years ago—why, I was a young man then. At that time I was helping my father in his business of breeding and dealing in horses, and many's the sale of some of his little lots that I've attended at Tattersall's yonder"—we were just passing Knightsbridge Green at the junction of the Kensington and Brompton Roads, and I nodded. "Yes, and I have taken horses for him half over England, Scotland, and Ireland in my time. What we were saying just now about a little pleasant conversation shortening a journey, reminds me of the shortest long journey I ever had, and all on that account. It came about by the merest chance—a curious one. If there's time I'd like to tell it you, sir, for though pleasant, it was near to coming to a bad end. Going far?"

"As far as you go," I answered, for whether I had been or not, I should have gone on now. The man interested me ; he was quite of a superior stamp—one of nature's gentlemen, in fact. I enjoyed talking to him, and I hadn't had so interesting a drive by the 'bus for twenty years.

"Then I will tell you, sir," he resumed. "I was taking a lot of young horses to a place—it doesn't matter where—between

Edinburgh and Glasgow, and left King's Cross one summer night by the mail train. I had a third-class ticket, and after I'd stowed the nags in two adjacent boxes, I took my place accordingly. At Peterborough we stopped for a few minutes—just time to get a cup of coffee, I thought, so I went into the refreshment-room and ordered one. It was an unconscionable time coming, and was scalding hot when it did come. I had to stand and blow it, and just as I had taken a sip and burnt my lips, 'whew!' went the whistle. I dropped the cup, dashed out on to the platform to see the train actually beginning to move. There wasn't a moment to spare. A porter had his hand on the handle of an open first-class door exactly opposite me. Before he could shut it I shoved him aside and went headlong into the carriage, sprawling on the floor. By the time I picked myself up the train was going ahead too fast to stop, and the engine was whistling so furiously that I doubt the driver could not have heard, whatever attempts the officials might be making to pull him up. Well, there I was ; I'd just saved my bacon, and that was all. If I had waited to get into the proper carriage, I should have lost the train and been in the deuce of a mess, with all those five horses and no one to look after them. The first thing I did was to apologise civilly, and explain, as well as I could, what had caused me to intrude in this ill-mannered fashion upon first-class passengers. There were three, and, lucky for me, good-natured gentlemen one and all. 'Never mind, my man,' says one. 'Never mind,' says another. 'Sit down,' says the third, 'there's a seat behind you ; make the best of it ; no great harm done.' So I did sit down, and the best of it was about as good as the best generally is. I knew we should stop again at Grantham, and while I was thanking them for the way they received me, of course I said I should get out and change carriages there.

"But, sir, will you believe it?" continued my omnibus driver, looking half round at me by way of enforcing the importance of his statement. "Will you believe it, sir, before we got to Grantham we were having such a pleasant chat about horses, and dogs, and sport, and the like, and I was describing my own little lot in the boxes behind, that, will you believe it, sir, as we were running into the station, and I was putting my hand out to open the door, these three good-natured gents

<sup>c</sup> When Tattersall's was in Grosvenor Place.

insisted — ay, regular insisted — I should go on — all the way to Newcastle with them in the carriage where I was?

"'We'll make up the difference for your ticket,' says they—they were all friends—and you can give us a few wrinkles, no doubt. It will be better for you and better for us. Here, take a sandwich and a drop of sherry."

"One of them was opening a little refreshment-case. Nothing loth, I did as desired, after which cigars were produced, and we all sat there smoking and talking as comfortable as possible. Who would have thought such a pleasant beginning of a journey was to have such a terrible finish? But of a sudden, somewhere near Durham, without the slightest warning, bump goes the carriage, then it aways to and fro for a second, and the next second——"

What happened to the omnibus driver and his companions in that next second I never learned until weeks later. For by the strangest coincidence, just as he reached the cigar stage of his narrative, we had passed off the wood pavement on to some asphalt, and just as the words "the next second" were on his lips, the legs of the off-horse slipped clean from under him, landing him on his side; the 'bus swayed to and fro ominously, stopped dead short, and the poor driver was pitched off his box head foremost. He struck against the one standing horse, and then, ricocheting against the other, fell heavily on to the asphalt. I should have lost my seat also, but for the rail in front, and it seemed a miracle that the whole concern did not capsize. It was the work of a moment, due, I presume, to the sudden check given by the fallen horse. I don't pretend to account for it otherwise. Nor, owing to the confusion that followed, and in the shouting of the crowd that gathered in less than two minutes, can I pretend to say what actually was said or done for some time. Beyond seeing that the driver was insensible and had to be lifted into a cab, I knew nothing. The other passengers on the top got off, so did I, slowly—so slowly that the cab had driven away with its helpless fare and a policeman to St. George's Hospital before I again stood on terra firma. I could gather little from the crowd, but the conductor opined that his mate could not have had the strap from the back of his box buckled, as it ought to have been, round his waist to keep him in his seat.

"He always was an off-handed, high-minded toff," said this red-faced janitor, without removing the straw he was smoking from his lips, "trying to skip up and down into his dickey as if he was twenty, instead of hard upon sixty as he is. I always expected to see him miss his footing and slip some day—that's the way with these nimble ones—and now he's been and half killed himself, poor cove, if he ain't quite."

Needless to say, I was greatly concerned, so I hailed a hansom and drove straight to St. George's. My friend had received a concussion of the brain, and I did not see him again for six weeks. Then he told me he remembered nothing after finding himself toppling over, and will not believe to this day that he was in hospital so long. The conclusion of his story was scarcely less dramatic than the incident which cut it short. He took it up with a dogged conviction that he had recounted its beginning only a few hours before. However, he said one day when he resumed his narrative: "Well, sir, as I was telling you, we were all sitting smoking pleasantly enough, when bump goes the carriage suddenly, bump, bump, and the next instant there was a tremendous crash, and the gentlemen and myself were rattled about like pills in a box. Then the train came to a standstill. It was just getting daylight. We were none of us hurt, only shaken, so we got out, and there in front we saw that our engine had smashed into the tail of a goods train just lapping over on to our line from the siding into which it had been insufficiently shunted. But the curious and astonishing part of it was just this, sir. Not only was that lucky shot of mine at the first-class carriage at Peterborough the cause of my having the pleasantest journey I ever had in my life, but it actually saved my life. For will you believe it, sir, I say again, that very third-class carriage where I had been sitting as far as Peterborough, and which was close to the engine, was crushed up like a match-box. But for that cup of coffee and the delay in its coming, I should have been seated there again and of course killed. Ah, sir, it's a curious world; I don't pretend to understand these things or what regulates them."

He is all right and at work again now. I often exchange nods with him on the road, but I have never soared to his

altitude since. As this memorable journey outside the 'bus was the most momentous I ever experienced, so I prefer that it shall remain my last.

## ZENOBIA: A COMMONPLACE GIRL.

A STORY IN NINE CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER I.

HER name was Zenobia. How could a commonplace, nineteenth century girl be expected to live up to a name like that? Moreover, the uncle and aunt with whom she lived were old-fashioned and slightly formal people. They held that a name was a name, and, as such, to be treated respectfully; they did not hold with nick-names, or pet names, or even the occasional employment of the most obvious abbreviations, such as Zen or Nobi. "Her name is Zenobia," they said severely, when her childish companions rashly ventured to shorten it; "be good enough to call her so." And Zenobia soon learnt to hate the name that, not unnaturally, provoked a good deal of juvenile criticism.

Nor did matters mend as she grew older. At school—she only went to a day-school in the next street, where everybody knew all about her, and resented an imaginary inclination on her part to "give herself airs," than which nothing could have been further from poor Zenobia's thoughts—at school, her life was made a burden to her by the hundred and one little devices by which the average school-girl knows so well how to make herself unpleasant to those whom she does not like.

Thus the girl grew up in a somewhat forlorn and friendless fashion, and her natural reserve was intensified tenfold by the lack of sympathetic companionship. The old people were kind to her in their way; but it was not the genial kindness that she craved for, but a sort of perfunctory good treatment that might tend to her physical comfort, but could never touch her heart. Life to Zenobia was colourless, flavourless, uninteresting in the extreme; she was being slowly starved mentally and morally. She was conscious of it in a vague, uncertain way, but had no power to alter circumstances; any more than she had knowledge to account for them, or patience to accept them uncomplainingly. At nineteen, patience of this sort is usually yet a great way off, and Zenobia was neither saint nor heroine, but

merely a commonplace girl in a somewhat chrysalis state.

Zenobia's uncle and aunt lived in the ugliest and dreariest of dull little country towns. It had been necessary for them to live there so long as he was in business; and by the time he had retired from it, some dozen years ago, habit had become second nature, and it had never occurred to them to make a change. The house was a good one, and it stood in a most respectable street; indeed, the respectability of that street was something overwhelming, and had a most depressing effect upon the spirits of those who were select enough to live in it. No one ever passed along it unless from a bitter sense of duty, and the very milk-carts seemed fearful of breaking its solemn calm. The blinds were always drawn more than half-way down, to guard the sanctity of the respectable middle-class life that was going on behind them. No stray cats ever lounged along the pavement, no lost dogs ever applied for temporary relief at the highly varnished doors. Beggars shunned that street; but policemen frequented it, for it was an excellent "beat" for the cultivation of undisturbed thought, occasionally varied by a few chance words with some comely cook over the area railings.

In this respectable street, behind the rigidly lowered blinds, Zenobia had passed her dreary girlhood; and behind those same lowered blinds she was sitting, one sunless November afternoon, reading. At least, she held a book in her hand, and her eyes were fixed upon it; but this studious appearance was merely assumed from a half-unconscious instinct of self-preservation. For the book was not an interesting one; it had been selected for her by her aunt, who now occupied a very straight-backed easy-chair on the other side of the fire. At the moment, the old lady's eyes were closed in quiet slumber; but Zenobia knew her well enough to be profoundly distrustful of this innocent-seeming sleep: she might wake up at any moment, and then, if she found her niece doing nothing—! Zenobia knew better than to risk such a catastrophe.

Her thoughts, however, had wandered far from the book in her hand, though they were scarcely brighter than its pages. The solemn dinner-party at which she would have to be present to-morrow evening was not an entertainment to excite feelings of pleasurable anticipation; she knew her aunt's dinner-parties too well to



expect any enjoyment from them, and this one was likely to be even more oppressively dull than most.

Zenobia stifled a yawn as she pictured to herself the well-known faces gathered for about the hundredth time in her recollection around the garishly gas-lit board.

The gas-lights at her aunt's parties were always brilliant; the conversation never was; but then no one expected brilliant conversation at Slowton. Zenobia had read of it in certain books that had not been selected for her by her aunt, and wondered sometimes whether she should ever be so happy as to listen to it in the flesh; not in Slowton—oh, no! She was not quite so foolish as to believe that possible, even in a day-dream; but somewhere, in some brighter, less hopelessly prosaic place. It didn't seem very probable even in her most sanguine moments, but youth is naturally hopeful; and despite the greyiness of her life, Zenobia was young still, though hitherto she had scarcely been aware of the fact.

An unwonted sound presently roused her from her sombre reverie, and she raised her head, and listened intently. An impious organ-grinder had brought his vulgar instrument into Queen Street, and was profaning its exclusive echoes with daring popular airs. It was not a bad organ as street-organs go, and the airs—though unquestionably vulgar—were bright, and full of an alluring liveliness. On that dull November afternoon they sounded very cheerful, Zenobia thought, and she rose softly, and stole to the window—which stood a little open, for the day was warm—to hear them better.

Surely Queen Street had never seen such a sight before as the one Zenobia's wondering eyes now rested on, as she peeped cautiously from below the lowered blind! A dark-eyed Italian was grinding away merrily, his white teeth flashing in his frequent smiles, while a gorgeously attired monkey danced, "high and dispossedly" as Queen Elizabeth herself, on the organ before him. It was a spectacle that would have filled her aunt with horror and indignation, but to Zenobia it had a certain indescribable charm. The intense life in the man's mobile face, and the bright scarlet coat of the monkey that lent a touch of vivid colour to the grey November afternoon, caught her fancy; and she raised the blind softly so as to see better.

Zenobia was not the only person in Queen Street who had come to the

window, attracted by the cheerful sounds. Somebody at the house opposite had not only pulled up the blind as high as it would go, and thrown up the window, but was leaning boldly out of it, his folded arms resting on the sill. He was quite unawed by the oppressive respectability of his surroundings, as was shown clearly enough by his frank laughter.

There was something infectious in the sound of that laughter, and Zenobia forgot to be scandalised at hearing it in such a place, and under such circumstances. She forgot, even, that she herself was plainly visible from that window opposite—ay, and from a great part of the street—as she stood there, staring with wide eyes of astonishment at the little drama that was being enacted in the road below.

Presently the young fellow at the window opposite turned away for a moment, and called back to some one in the room behind. A boy joined him then; a boy whom Zenobia knew slightly, and would have liked to know better, but for her shyness and reserve. He was the cripple son of wealthy parents, who idolised—but did not know what to do with—him; and were always trying educational experiments in the hope that they might by good luck hit upon something that would help them out of the difficulty.

The boy's pale face contrasted pitifully with the manly strength and beauty of his companion's features, but it reflected their sunny smile; and Zenobia thought she had never seen poor Cecil Paxton look so bright as when he presently rained down a whole handful of coppers on to the pavement below, and laughed at the comical agility with which the scarlet-coated monkey picked them up, and the extraordinary genuflections with which he acknowledged them.

But the sound of that merry laughter unfortunately aroused Zenobia's slumbering aunt to a startled consciousness that something untoward was going on, somewhere in the vicinity.

"Zenobia, what is it?" she asked drowsily; "I thought I—come away from that window, Zenobia!" with a sudden change to a higher, shriller key. "Zenobia, I wonder at you! What are you doing there?"

"Looking out," said the girl briefly, as she turned away, flushing hotly.

"Looking out! Yes, I can see that. But has it occurred to you that if you can look out, others can look in? A pretty sight

for all the gossips of Slowton to see you—my niece, Zenobia Brabourne—staring out of window like any vulgar nurse-girl! And you've pulled the blind up, too, just for all the world as if we were second-rate seaside lodgings! Draw it down again directly, and come back to your chair. What did you see out there?"

"A monkey and an organ-grinder," Zenobia replied; and as she spoke she felt bitterly conscious that the little scene, thus described, had somehow lost all its picturesque charm of quaintness and colour. No wonder her aunt smiled disdainfully.

"A monkey? How childish! An organ-grinder? How vulgar! Really, at nineteen you ought not to take interest in such things. When I was your age——"

Still the reproving voice scolded on, and Zenobia heard, but heeded not. After all, her offence had not been so very grave a one. She had been silly, perhaps, but what of that? The young man opposite must be a good deal more than nineteen years old, yet he was not ashamed to watch the monkey's antics. He would not think her even silly for laughing at them, too—not that she had laughed. A faint smile had just parted her red lips, but that was all. Zenobia was too unaccustomed to laughter to take to it naturally; she had been interested rather than amused, and the charge of vulgarity her aunt had seen fit to hurl at her, had recalled her to herself with a rude shock.

But the charge was unjust, and Zenobia knew it. Therefore she listened in silence till the stream of the old lady's reproofs was exhausted, and dreary silence once more reigned in the rapidly darkening room, behind the sheltering blinds.

## CHAPTER II.

It was the terrible twenty minutes before dinner, and the guests were arriving rapidly.

They were none of them remarkable in any way, so far as could be judged from appearances; nor were the scraps of conversation that could be disentangled from the general chatter, exactly of a nature to impress an impartial listener with a high opinion of the intellectual powers of the speakers. Very worthy people, all of them; good, solid people; who went to church once every Sunday because it was the proper thing to do, and had a respectable balance at their bankers'. The sort of people, in fact, who had made Slowton the town it was; and were ad-

mirably adapted to live in it with comfort and complacency when made.

Zenobia, standing a little apart—a stately young figure, clad all in white of a somewhat severe cut—saw and heard; and wondered what enjoyment such people could find in meeting others so exactly like themselves; or whether, indeed, anybody ever enjoyed anything—at least, in a Slowton drawing-room. The girl was feeling hopelessly bored, and the efforts she had conscientiously made to contribute a few feeble remarks to the general small-talk had been singularly unsuccessful, and met with but scanty encouragement. She had, therefore, lapsed into silence, though she felt bitterly conscious that her silence would be taken as much amiss as her efforts at conversation had been. Some people seem doomed to be always in the wrong; and Zenobia knew that she was one of them. It was not an agreeable conviction.

"Have you heard about the Paxtons' latest fad?" said old Mrs. Turner to Mr. Brabourne. "I shall be surprised if they don't make a fool of that boy Cecil among them."

"Very likely you may be right, but it is a difficult question, a very difficult question," he replied pompously. "The boy has ability, I understand, but his education hitherto has been extremely desultory, and if this young fellow—what's his name again? Devondale, eh?—if he can induce Cecil——"

"Mrs. Paxton and Mr. Devondale."

Zenobia started; he had not been invited, she knew; but there, following Mrs. Paxton into the room, was the identical young man she had seen at the opposite window the day before.

He was faultlessly attired in evening dress, and his handsome features were composed in an expression of pensive gravity very different from the look they had worn on that previous occasion; but she knew him at once, and flushed slightly as she recalled all the circumstances under which she had seen him, and—terrible thought!—he had seen her.

"I must apologise for Mr. Paxton's absence," the lady was explaining meantime, in a loud but not unmusical voice. "So unfortunate, but he had to go to London on business. So I have brought Mr. Devondale to represent him—Mr. Devondale, Mrs. Brabourne."

"Very pleased to see Mr. Devondale, I am sure; though sorry for the reason."

Mrs. Brabourne smiled stiffly as she shook hands with him. She was not quite sure yet whether he was a suitable person to sit at her table, or whether Mrs. Paxton had not taken a liberty in bringing him. She eyed him a little distrustfully, therefore; for he was so handsome, so utterly unlike the Slowton type, that she doubted—she didn't wish to be uncharitable, of course, but she doubted whether he would be quite—

"It's so tiresome having one's numbers thrown out at the last," Mrs. Paxton went on, with serene unconsciousness of her hostess's feelings of perplexity; "and I thought that perhaps you might be thirteen without Mr. Paxton—I never sit down thirteen to dinner under any circumstances—so it was a very lucky thing I had Mr. Devondale in the house." Should you have been thirteen if I hadn't brought him?"

"No; I never give such small dinner-parties as that!" with dignity. "It is really hardly worth while. I suppose, as no one here knows anything about Mr. Devondale," she added, lowering her voice to a confidential murmur, "I had better send him in with Zenobia? Otherwise I might give offence."

"Oh, he's quite the gentleman, I assure you. His father's a clergyman, I believe, and Mr. Paxton was quite satisfied with his references."

Mrs. Paxton's voice, even when slightly lowered, was still distinctly audible to the entire company; but, if Mr. Devondale heard, he betrayed no consciousness that he knew himself to be the subject of such flattering remarks, unless a slight contraction at the corners of his well-cut mouth might be taken as a sign of half-contemptuous amusement.

Then Mr. Brabourne, after a moment's surprised contemplation of this unlooked-for guest, stepped forward and welcomed him civilly enough; but as any geniality of manner was impossible to this frosty-natured man, his greeting was little calculated to remove the unpleasant impression his wife's stiff reception of Mr. Devondale might well be supposed to have left on the mind of the young fellow himself, and of all who observed it. However, geniality was not highly thought of in Slowton, so that the lack of it was the less remarked.

"Dear me, 'speak of the—' and we all know what happens!" Mrs. Turner exclaimed. "Zenobia, was your aunt aware—why, what a colour you've got, child! I hadn't observed the room was so hot."

"Shall I open the window a little?" and Zenobia turned to it, thankful to have something to occupy her, and distract her attention from the little scene at the other end of the room—a scene that filled her with wrath and mortification.

"Not for the world! I can't endure the night air right on my back, and you must be mad to propose such a thing," Mrs. Turner said indignantly. "Do you wish me to be in my bed to-morrow, and wrung with pain? No, no; I must decline to oblige you so far."

Zenobia closed the curtains again and sat down resignedly.

In another moment Mrs. Brabourne bore down upon her niece, followed by the unbidden guest, and hastily introduced him to her; afterwards bustling on her way to explain to the highly respectable old gentleman who was to have taken Zenobia in to dinner the unavoidable change in the programme.

"I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you before, Miss Brabourne?"

Zenobia raised her eyes, flushing slightly. He remembered her, then, this self-possessed young man, with the bright smile and the pleasant voice? The flash of recognition she had seen in his eyes, as they met hers in that first moment of his entrance, had really been for her, and for her alone. It was a gratifying but alarming thought.

"I did not know that you saw me," she said shyly.

"You thought I was too much occupied with the monkey?" he laughed. "It really was a clever little beast, but not quite so absorbing as all that. I am to have the pleasure of taking you in to dinner," he added, as the general move to the dining-room began. "I am going to ask you to instruct me in all the Slowton politics."

"You will not find them very interesting," guardedly.

"I'm not so sure of that," he replied, as they fell into their place in the stately little procession. "It must be a very dull place in which there is absolutely nothing to interest me."

"Slowton is a very dull place indeed," Zenobia said emphatically.

"You speak with such an air of conviction that I must suppose you have lived here some time?"

"All my life, if one can call it living. Nothing ever happens here. You would hardly believe it, but that monkey yesterday was quite an event—a very undesirable one, my aunt thought."

"You certainly appear to suffer from a lack of incident," he observed thoughtfully. "Cecil has told me something of this, but—you know Cecil, of course?"

"A little; yes."

"Are you aware that the boy worships you afar off? No, I am not joking," as she turned upon him eyes of frank astonishment. "He would like to know you more than a little."

"Poor boy, how dull he must be!"

"He, or his life?" he asked, with an amused smile.

"Do you honestly think that we look an interesting race, we natives of Slowton?" she retorted, lowering her voice a little, as she glanced along the line of faces opposite. "Do you think life can be anything but dull among such people as we are?"

He, too, following the direction of her eyes, glanced at those Slowton faces; and then at the delicate profile and proudly poised head of the girl beside him.

"No," he admitted slowly; "the natives of Slowton are not an interesting-looking race, but—there are exceptions. The exceptions, while proving the rule, make amends for all the rest."

"I suppose Cecil is an exception?"

"Most decidedly so; I find him a most interesting bear."

"A bear?"

How pretty she was when she raised her great dark eyes with that puzzled look in them! Mr. Devondale might be pardoned for thinking that Cecil was not the only exception to the general rule of Slowton dullness.

"Yes, a bear. I'm his bear-leader, you know."

"You! Not really?"

"Really and truly. The doubt you express is not at all complimentary to my powers of tuition," he added, with a little laugh. "Do you know your scepticism wounds me very deeply?"

"No, no; it is not your powers I doubt, but the fact that you should care to use them for such a purpose. Surely it is waste of time for you to stay in such a place as Slowton?"

"Now I fear you overrate my little gifts even more than you previously seemed to undervalue them," he replied, with more gravity than he had yet shown. "I don't suppose the world will be much the worse for my temporary seclusion in the solemn shades of Queen Street, while I myself——"

"Yes?" as he paused.

"I hope to be much the better. You

don't doubt, I trust, that I'm capable of improvement?"

"I know so little about you——"

"True;" as she hesitated, looking at him with serious, questioning eyes. "When you know me better, you will answer my question, and, I hope, favourably."

"It is not very likely I shall ever know you better."

There was a tone of something very like regret in the soft voice, and Mr. Devondale wondered a little if he, too, might be counted as "an event" in the dull life this girl led at Slowton. He hoped most devoutly that it might be so.

"Why not? Our houses are on friendly terms; we exchange visits, and all that sort of thing. You live in Slowton, and I propose to make a long stay here. Oh, we must be better acquainted, Miss Brabourne—unless, of course, you do not choose to associate with a tutor, a bear-leader?"

"Oh, you cannot think I meant that," she exclaimed, in a tone of dismay. "It is not a question of my 'choosing' at all, but of Slowton society; and that"—she raised her eyebrows expressively—"you see what that is!"

"I do; and I suppose it won't recognise me except on sufferance?"

"I don't know; I never heard of a case like yours," she replied slowly. "The boys all go to school, so that there are no tutors in the town. With Cecil, of course, it is different. But in Slowton we never seem to know anybody any better. It isn't the way of the place."

"A most unfriendly way the Slowton one appears to be! Can nothing be done to alter it?"

"Would it be worth while? Do you really think that you would be the better for knowing more of the people here?"

"Speaking generally, perhaps not; but in some particular instances—like Cecil's, you know"—"and yours," he would have liked to add, but the utter lack of self-consciousness in the beautiful eyes that were raised so earnestly to his, kept him silent. It was evident that this girl knew nothing of the language of compliment. "Yes, in some instances I would like to know more of the people here."

"I doubt whether you will ever do so," she replied, in all seriousness.

Mr. Devondale did not question her conviction further, but rather devoted his attention to the opportunity he now enjoyed of improving his acquaintance with one of the people of Slowton; though he



felt that it was almost an insult to classify her, even in jest, with the wearisomely prosperous, vulgarly self-complacent men and women around them.

But it was not very easy to get acquainted with Zenobia. She was reserved, and had none of the little social arts by which the girls he usually met knew how to help the conversation along, and give general statements a personal application. She was so serious, so intensely in earnest about everything, that he found himself growing serious, too, and talking to her as gravely as though he were a hundred and one, instead of barely five-and-twenty. By-and-by, he thought, when he knew her a little better, he would try if it might not be possible to bring a smile to the pale, serious face, and the light of laughter to the grave grey eyes. By-and-by, but not now. She could not be expected to smile and laugh all at once; she, who had grown up in Slowton; upon whose sad young soul the crushing Slowton influences still weighed heavily! She would have to learn to smile, to learn to laugh; and he, Francis Devondale, was the man to teach her; of that he was assured.

When the ladies had withdrawn, he had every opportunity of observing the amazing paucity of ideas that was the most remarkable characteristic of the men of Slowton. The Rector alone, who was a gentleman and a scholar, occasionally had something to say that was really worth saying, and said it well. He found in him a pleasant companion during the somewhat lengthy interval that elapsed before they all repaired to the drawing-room; where Mrs. Brabourne was entertaining the other ladies with a long story about some little fracas that had occurred some days before below-stairs, while Zenobia played a classical piece on the piano with great correctness, and no feeling; but then the piece did not seem to require any.

"Will some one else give us a little music?" Mrs. Brabourne said, as Zenobia's final chords were drowned in a burst of small-talk. "Mrs. Paxton, you play, I know."

"Oh, get Mr. Devondale to sing: he sings splendidly—just like a professional!" she said carelessly.

"But, my dear Mrs. Paxton, surely

professional singing would be a little out of place in my drawing-room!"

"Oh, but he is not really professional, you know; he only sings just like a professional, which is quite a different thing."

"Mrs. Paxton is getting a little mixed in my profession," Mr. Devondale remarked aside to Zenobia, whom he had speedily joined at the piano; "she forgets that I am only the bear-leader, not the bear; so it is unfair to expect a performance from me."

"But you will sing, will you not?"

"If you wish it, certainly!" with a slight emphasis on the pronoun. "But to oblige Mrs. Paxton, no!"

"I do wish it, indeed!"

So when Mrs. Brabourne presently asked him, she did not ask in vain.

Certainly, it was not often that a Slowton drawing-room heard such singing as Mrs. Brabourne's did that night.

A more cultured audience would have known better how to appreciate the rare beauty of voice, and high excellence of style and training; but even upon the Slowton mind some impression was made by a performance so utterly unlike anything it was accustomed to, and the company paid Mr. Devondale the extraordinary compliment—at least, it was an extraordinary compliment in Slowton circles—of listening to him in profound silence.

But Francis Devondale cared little what impression he made upon the Slowton mind in general. He saw nothing—cared to see nothing—but a slight, girlish figure, clad in white, framed in the sombre window-curtains; a fair, sweet face, crowned with wavy dark hair; deep grey eyes, full of changing expression, of ever-varying light and shadow, of sympathetic emotion. Those eyes were a revelation to him while he sang; even as his singing, with all its passion and its power, was a revelation to her.

But the singing ceased, the revelation was over; and soon afterwards Mrs. Brabourne's party broke up, and her guests took their departure.

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